Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE) Project  
AFGHANISTAN

Quarterly Report

April 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007

Submitted By:
University of California at Davis

In Collaboration With:
Texas A&M University System

A USAID-funded Project  
Cooperative Agreement No. 306-A-00-06-00521-00

June 27, 2007
**Summary**

We have focused on three major activities this quarter.

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Land (MAIL) have been fully engaged with our project from the beginning. We have produced *Memorandums of Understanding* (MOU) with 2 Departments within the MAIL (i.e., Animal Health and Natural Resource Management). They were both signed by the Technical Deputy Minister of Agriculture. The Department of Natural Resource Management is involved in institutionalizing the Livestock Early Warning System while the Department of Animal Health is helping us implement the Near Infrared Nutritional Profiling System. These two 2 systems will provide valuable information regarding forage quantity and quality for Afghanistan. This year we trained 18 MAIL staff in support of the LEWS and 2 Afghans in support of the Nutritional profiling system.

- Linking our information to herders is a major challenge and we feel that we are on the right track with the Department of Kuchi Affairs. This independent department has been very helpful and is interested in being a major conduit for the information we can deliver.

- Finally, capacity building within the MAIL has been delivered this year in the form of intensive field training. We have invested over 3 months of face to face time with MAIL employees. We anticipate that three of the Kabul employees assigned to our project will be able to help us train many more government staff and university students in the coming year.

**Major Implementation Activities Initiated this Quarter**

**B. Infusion of the Forage Monitoring System**

During our last quarter, focus had been on conducting vegetation surveys to acquire the data needed develop the Livestock Early Warning System. Field work required to implement the LEWS project began in April. We were able to conduct vegetation surveys in 7 Provinces. These included Kabul, Parwan, Baglan, Kunduz, Takhar, Bamyan and Panjshir. Staff from the Department of Land Resources within the Ministry of Agriculture accompanied us during all the field work. We were able to train a total of 18 MAIL employees during our sampling period.

A MOU between our project and the Department of Natural Resource Management was signed on April 8th, 2007. It clearly outlines what the PEACE Project and the MAIL will contribute to establish the Livestock Early Warning System.

**C. Infusion of the NIRS Nutritional Management System.**

We invited people from this department to attend a NIRS training in Mongolia but we encountered a problem with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They sat on the invitation paperwork making nearly impossible for us to obtain the visas in time for the journey. Instead, we went with plan “B” and invited a Mercy Corps Veterinarian and our technical assistant to Mongolia so that we would be able to transfer the information learned in Mongolia to the Animal Health Dept. The Mercy Corps Vet used to work with in Dr. Osmani’s department and maintains a good working relationship with him and the other department staff. Subsequently, the information transfer should be smooth as they are trusted colleagues.
A MOU between our project and the Department of Animal Health was signed on June 24th, 2007. It clearly outlines what the PEACE Project and the MAIL will contribute to establish the Near Infrared Nutritional Profiling System.

**D. Forage Monitoring and Nutritional Information Delivery and Outreach.**

The outreach and delivery of project information is being developed through several potential avenues. We are working with the MAIL to develop a radio program that will be broadcast over “am” radio straight from the government radio station at the Ministry of Agriculture. We have also developed relationships with other projects that are trying to help Kuchi herders. Tribal Liaison Office, Shelter Now, Medair and Assets are among the NGO’s we have discussed collaborations. These organizations are providing various services to Kuchi herders and could provide important in-roads for us to reach Kuchi with forage condition and market information. In return, we can assist these organizations with conflict resolution issues for Kuchi in their areas of influence.

**E. Linking the Technology with Herder Alliances**

We have discussed the dissemination of our forage condition information with the most relevant NGO’s and the MAIL. They are all very aware of the potential advantages that the early warning system has for planning for mitigation activities. Relevant NGO’s include those that work directly with Kuchi Herders.

The General Director of Kuchi, Agha Doud Shah Niazi, has introduced us to some of his provincial staff. He has proved us with unlimited access to Kuchi through his office. He is also very interested in conflict resolution regarding access to grazing lands for Kuchi. After the conflict resolution workshop in May, we discussed priority areas to test some negotiation and resolution methods. We are planning to visit those areas in the early fall with our conflict resolution consultant. This will be a “learning by doing” exercise and allow us to refine and facilitate the development of a conflict resolution strategy for Kuchi herders.

**F. Building Capacity within the MAIL, NGOs and the University**

Our primary capacity building focus this past quarter has been with the Ministry of Agriculture. We placed a major amount of time in developing the relationship between the departments within the MAIL and the PEACE Project. Our goal was to first develop trust with individuals and then to proceed by including the relevant MAIL staff in the initiation of our project. We started with an MOU that spelled out the Ministry’s role in providing people to be trained to how to implement the Livestock Early Warning System. In this way we hoped to develop the foundation on which the sustainability of the system could be built. Several MAIL staff from Kabul accompanied us during the entire field season. While sampling each province we would also bring at least 2 local MAIL staff members with us.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Animal Science at the University of Kabul were also informed of the PEACE project’s objectives and desire to train University students. We determined, however, that we should begin building capacity within the MAIL first, and then after we had a core group of Ministry people trained the training of the University students would be easier and more effective. In this way we have trained future trainers.
**Other Achievements this Quarter**

1. We were able to provide training to 49 people during two workshops that focused on negotiation strategies and conflict resolution techniques. The second workshop targeted government employees. We specifically invited government people that regularly deal with land-use conflicts. Five provincial representatives from the Department of Kuchi Affairs were among the attendees. It is our goal to engage these representatives into using known methods of conflict resolution to solve the many problems they are facing. We had very positive feedback from most attendees and we were asked to continue to provide this type of support.

2. During vegetation surveys this field season we collected over 200 species of plants. These were collect in triplicate when possible and most were identified to genus. One copy was sent to the University of Gottingen in Germany for identification to species. This University has several botanists that specialize in middle-Asian plants and a reference collection from Afghanistan. The specimens were shipped out of the country at the end of June and should be identified by the end of July. Plant identification is essential for running the plant growth model that operates the Livestock Early Warning System. We were assisted in sending these plants out of the country by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment.